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Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7172nd meeting

Monday, 12 May 2014, 3 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Oh Joon	(Republic of Korea)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Gálvez
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein
	Lithuania	Mrs. Murmokaitė
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Pankin
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of South Sudan to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, to whom I now give the floor.

The Secretary-General: Thank you, Mr. President for inviting me to brief the Council today. I thank the Security Council for its attention to the mounting crisis in South Sudan. I visited the country last week to sound the alarm about the violence and the risk of catastrophic famine and to press the leaders to step back from their destructive path.

I had a long and productive meeting with President Salva Kiir last Tuesday in Juba, and spoke by telephone to former Vice-President Mr. Riek Machar. My message to both was clear: they must work together to heal the wounds they have opened.

I am pleased that they responded positively to my appeal to reopen dialogue. I welcome the ceasefire agreement signed in Addis Ababa on Friday and I commend the mediation role of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Dessalegn of Ethiopia. I call on the international community to continue to support IGAD's efforts.

Since the crisis began five months ago, many thousands of South Sudanese have been killed, atrocities have been committed by both sides, more than 1 million people have been displaced and nearly 5 million more need humanitarian assistance. If the conflict continues, half of South Sudan's 12 million people will either become internally displaced, refugees abroad, starving or dead by the year's end.

In Juba, I visited the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) Tomping protection-of-civilians site, which hosts some 20,000 people. I was appalled by the conditions they must endure, which are worse than in any of the many refugee camps I have visited around the world, including the refugee camps for Syrians. But let me emphasize: our peacekeeping bases are not designed to accommodate such an influx, nor should they be. UNMISS and the various United Nations agencies are now working to provide safer, more hygienic accommodations for the more than 80,000 people we are sheltering around the country.

The United Nations policy of opening our gates as an emergency option to protect innocent civilians is correct, unprecedented and not without considerable risk to United Nations staff, to our relations with communities and to those we are trying to shelter. It is not a routine decision, nor one taken lightly, but one that we were morally compelled to take.

I am proud of the actions of our United Nations peacekeepers and civilian staff. Their quick response and courage has saved tens of thousands of lives. But that is not a long-term solution. This is an entirely man-made calamity and it needs the engagement of all actors to change course. I see five priorities.

First, the fighting must end immediately. People need to be able to go back to their land to plant and tend their crops in peace. Hunger and malnutrition are already widespread. If the planting window is missed, there will be a real risk of famine. That is why we are calling for 30 days of tranquility, backed by both sides. I am troubled by accusations already from both sides of breaches of the ceasefire and I urge maximum restraint by all parties.

Secondly, both sides must fulfil their commitment to allowing humanitarian access by air, road and, in particular, by barge along the Nile River. Peacekeepers and aid workers are operating under increasingly difficult circumstances Attacks on the United Nations and the humanitarian community are unacceptable. They must cease immediately, and all parties should respect international human rights and humanitarian law.

Thirdly, the international community must support humanitarian action. The United Nations is launching a massive operation to help 3.2 million people, but we need resources. The humanitarian community is $781 million short of the $1.27 billion that we estimate is needed by the middle of the year. I urge all countries to support the forthcoming 20 May donor conference

on South Sudan to be hosted by Norway and the United Nations.

Fourthly, there must be justice and accountability. The human rights report issued by UNMISS last Thursday underscores the level of atrocities committed by all sides. There are reasonable grounds to believe that crimes against humanity have been committed. A special or hybrid tribunal with international involvement should be considered.

Fifthly, the two leaders must recommit to inclusive nation-building that involves all political leaders and civil society. That means addressing the root causes of the conflict. They must cease a senseless power struggle and restore the sense of national unity that prevailed at the time of independence.

I commend the leadership of Prime Minister Dessalegn of Ethiopia as Chairman of IGAD and the efforts of United States Secretary of State John Kerry. Political dialogue is the only answer. Now the onus is on both South Sudanese leaders to accelerate the momentum for peace.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

Mr. Deng (South Sudan): I thank you, Mr. President, and members of the Security Council for giving me another opportunity to address the Council on the unfolding tragic situation in our country. I am also pleased and honoured to share the platform with the Secretary-General, whom I served for five years as Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide.

The reports of violations of human rights law and international humanitarian law associated with the devastating conflict that our country has been experiencing are extremely disturbing. In my previous statement (see S/PV.7168), I reported on what the Government is trying to do by creating a national investigation committee and cooperating with the African Union commission of inquiry.

On a positive note, the recent developments point at a more encouraging direction towards peace. Following the much appreciated visits of United States Secretary of State John Kerr, and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who successfully persuaded the leaders of the warring factions to meet face-to-face, President Salva Kiir and Mr. Riek Machar did indeed meet under the determined and unrelenting mediation of the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Hailemariam Dessalegn, and signed a framework agreement for the peace process.

The agreement not only stipulates the immediate cessation of hostilities, in reaffirmation of the 23 January cessation of hostilities agreement, but also commits the parties to the separation of their forces and the deployment of the monitoring and verification mechanism of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The agreement also stipulates opening humanitarian corridors and unconditional cooperation with the United Nations and humanitarian agencies to ensure that humanitarian aid reaches the affected populations in all areas of the country.

The parties also agreed to establish a transitional Government of national unity and to engage all stakeholders, including the former detainees, political parties, civil society and faith-based organizations, in negotiating the formation of the transitional Government, agreeing on the permanent Constitution of South Sudan and addressing any other issues concerning the future of the country.

The credit for that positive turn of events must of course go first and foremost to the leaders of South Sudan, especially President Salva Kiir for heeding requests to reach out to Mr. Riek Machar, and Mr. Machar, in turn, for responding positively, making it possible to end the massive destruction of life and property that has devastated the country. Considering the bitterness of the conflict and how divided the nation has become, that remarkable shift could not have been possible without international pressure. The South Sudanese people, who have been the primary victims of such rampant violence, are most grateful to the international community, in particular the leaders of IGAD, the African Union, the United Nations and the United States. It is further testimony to the commitment of the United Nations and the international community to support South Sudan in overcoming the formidable challenges that it has faced since achieving independence after half a century of a devastating war of liberation.

It is also testimony to the increasing international commitment to assist post-conflict countries in consolidating peace, security and stability as preconditions for socioeconomic development. Even more significant is the international commitment to

assist Governments in protecting their populations, which is first and foremost their responsibility. However, when a State lacks the capacity to discharge that national responsibility, it is incumbent upon the international community to provide the necessary support to enhance State capacity in fulfilling its national responsibility.

The Government of South Sudan is well aware of its responsibility to protect its people, even though, as we have often acknowledged, the capacity of the State to do so is extremely constrained by a number of historical factors related to the long war. International support to enhance the capacity of the State is therefore of critical importance. That is why we have consistently argued that, while the international community will need to reorder its priorities in the light of the current crisis, support for State capacity-building should remain high in the new order of priorities.

As someone who observed first-hand the response of the United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, I have witnessed the compassion and passion with which the Secretary-General and his senior managers have dedicated themselves to assisting South Sudan in consolidating peace, security and development. It is also known that the troika comprising Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States, in addition to our sister countries in the region and international friends and partners, have been steadfast in their support for South Sudan before and after independence.

South Sudan has been experiencing one of the worst atrocities that the world has seen in recent years. By the same token, it has also received concerted international attention and support. We hope that the spectacular accomplishment of Secretary Kerry and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will be sustained and will lead South Sudan to a renewed commitment to peace, security, stability and dignity for all its people.

As President Kiir said to Secretary Kerry, he is a man of his word and is committed to honouring the agreement. That is why he immediately gave orders for his troops to stop any military activities against the rebels except in strict self-defence if attacked. We trust that Mr. Riek Machar will also honour his word. Both the principles to which President Salva Kiir has always expressed his commitment and those that Mr. Riek Machar has often invoked to justify his rebellion should provide a basis for common ground.

It has always been my belief that the cultural values of our people advocate peace, unity and harmony. Even when the society is shattered by violent conflict, the objective of the peace process has always been a balance between justice and accountability through the restoration of unity, forgiveness and reconciliation. That does not, however, mean compromising the principles of justice and accountability. The challenge then becomes how to balance such principles so as to maximize the positives and minimize the negatives.

We fully realize that those are the challenges that our country and the international community face to ensure peace, while also holding accountable those responsible for the gross violations of human rights and humanitarian law.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 3.20 p.m.